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The Doctrine of Election and Reprobation.

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*"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."*—ROM. viii: 30.

In the investigation of this subject, we shall notice,

1st. The Calvinistic system.

2ndly. The reasons why we object to that system.

3rdly. Our system as we understand it.

4thly. The practical influence of both.

1st. Present the Calvinistic system. This we will do in their own language. Calvin defines "Predestination to be the eternal decree of God, by which he has determined, in himself, what he will have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with a similar destiny. But eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man therefore being created for one or other of these ends, we say he is predestinated either to life or death."

Buck says, "predestination is the decree of God, whereby he hath, for his own glory, foreordained whatever comes to pass." In the Westminster Confession of Faith it is defined in these words: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his own glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These men, and angels thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangably designed, and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished." In keeping with this definition, in answer to the 59th

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In the larger Catechism, it is said, "Redemption is certainly effectually communicated to all those for whom Christ shed it."

According to this system, thus stated, it appears that nothing ever takes place in the wide sweep of eternity, whether acts of sin or deeds of crime, but that God has decreed and foreordained its issue. Having stated the doctrine, we will now notice some passages of scripture thought to prove it. The first may be found in Rom. 9: 11, 12, 13, "For the children, being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works but of him that calleth: it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." By election, in this passage, we are doubtless to understand God's choice of Abraham in preference to all others, to make his descendants a great nation, and to bless all the families of the earth in his seed, who is Christ. The purpose of God expresses his fixed determination to carry out that election. The inquiry then is, why did God choose Abraham for that purpose? An answer may be found in Gen. 18: 18, 19:—"Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him: and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice, and judgement." We here learn that God's choice had reference, 1st. to Abraham's personal faith and obedience, and 2ndly to the faith, and obedience of his descendants. The first is taught in the expressions, "I know him," the second in this: "And they shall keep the way of the Lord." The choice of Isaac and Jacob was in consequence of the choice of Abraham, and no doubt made for the same reasons.

God knew that Jacob and his descendants would serve him, and that Esau and his would not, as their history abundantly proves. The expression "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," teaches us that God, who is omnipresent, regarded the future obedience and love of Jacob and his descendants. That we are to understand this passage in a national sense, is evident from the fact that it is said the elder shall serve the younger. Esau never did serve Jacob, but his posterity did. The word "hate" does not mean eternal reprobation, but only less love. Unless a man hate father and mother, &c., he cannot be my disciple; that is, unless you love me more than them. Hence, to us it is quite clear that this passage, instead of proving the unconditional election and reprobation of any, most certainly shows that God's choice

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or election is made with reference to faith and obedience, being the legitimate and certain fruit of the former.

The next stands in Rom. 9: 15., "For he saith to Moses have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

From this passage some seem to think that God's mercy and compassion are extended without any regard to faith, repentance, or anything else in the creature moving him thereto. Let us see. We are here taught that the mercy and compassion of God are bestowed according to his will. What then is the will of God in this particular? Whosoever believeth shall be saved, and whosoever believeth not shall be damned. We here learn that God's will is to bestow mercy and compassion on, or to save, all those who believe in Christ, and to damn all who do not.

"For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, even for the same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout the earth." The case of Pharaoh is thought to be a stronghold for the Calvinist. That God, as a sovereign, can and often does choose certain characters to answer certain ends, we presume none will deny. But that he makes a man wicked and then punishes him for being so, we think all ought to deny. It is said of Pharaoh God hardened his heart. It is also said he hardened his own heart.

If it can be shown that God, contrary to the disposition and will of Pharaoh hardened his heart, then it would do for a Calvinistic text. But we have no idea that this can, or ever will be done. How did God harden his heart? No doubt by withholding the means of softening, that is, his spirit and mercies. The consequence is the heart becomes hard. That men can, and often do act so wickedly, and presumptuously that God is thereby provoked to withdraw his spirit, is a doctrine abundantly taught in the Bible. It was thus with the Antediluvians, the Sodomites and the Jews. Why not so with Pharaoh? To us it is quite certain it was so. The Canaanites were devoted to destruction, for their wickedness. The Egyptians were extremely wicked: but especially Pharaoh. And it was no doubt to punish him, and them as their crimes deserved, and that he might show to the surrounding nations that he was God alone, and that they ought to fear and serve him, that God raised him to the throne, and hardened his heart. Then the case of Pharaoh mainly proves this great and fearful truth, that God will punish men for their crimes, by withholding his

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mercies, and thus give them over to hardness of heart, to of mind to believe a lie that they may be damned. It cannot aid the Calvinist any in support of his doctrine.

"Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?" By reference to the 18th of Jeremiah the reader may find a clear illustration of this text. All must admit that God (here represented by the potter) has entire power over man (represented by the clay.) But who believes that God exercises all the power he has? No potter, when he undertakes to make a vessel intends to make one that will answer no valuable purpose. So we think in reference to God. It was no part of his plan in the formation of man to make some good, and others bad. God never made a man a sinner. Men make themselves sinners. That is, they mar in the hands of their Creator. And this is the reason that God makes some vessels of wrath, and others vessels of mercy. It is not his will that any be vessels of wrath independent of their wicked deeds, no more than it was the will of the potter that the clay mar in his hand. To our mind this text clearly teaches, that it is God's eternal purpose to be merciful to, and establish every nation, or individual that forsakes evil, and follows him, and to pull down and destroy every nation or individual that will not.

We will notice but one passage more; and that is the text. And 1st we remark that those who love God, the called according to his purpose, and whom he foreknows, are here spoken of as being identically the same persons. The reader would do well to bear this in mind. Who is it then that loves God? The christian. Who are the called according to his purpose? The christian. Whom does he foreknow? The christian? and no other in the sense of the text. To foreknow in the sense here intended no doubt is the same as to regard with love and complacency. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." No sinner then loves God, nor is the called according to his purpose, nor is foreknown of him. Let this also be borne in mind. We here learn that it is God's eternal purpose that all christians be conformed to the image of Christ; that they be called his children; that they be held as justified in his sight, and that they be finally glorified.

II. Having given our views of some passages thought to prove the doctrine, we shall offer some reasons why we object to it. In doing this, we shall express our mind freely, yet with due deference to those who may differ with us. If God has decreed whatever comes to pass, it follows

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1st, That God's will is as perfectly done by the sinner as the sinner is a sinner.

2dly, That God delights in sin; and 3rdly, That God in some sense is chargeable with all the sin committed in the universe. We object that some, if not all of these conclusions, are rejected by the advocates of this doctrine. But it does appear to us they cannot be avoided. Let us see. A decree is a determination, or firm resolve either to do, or to cause to be done a certain thing, Dan. 6 & 7. Hence the kind, or quality of decrees always bespeaks the mind or will of their author; the character of the decreer can be arrived at from the nature of his decrees. If the decrees be good, it proves their author delights in good; if evil that he delights in evil. For a good being, unrestrained will not decree an evil thing, nor an evil being a good thing.

And further, a decree being an expression of the will, is always in accordance with the will. They can never be contrary. It is therefore the will of the decreer that his decrees be promptly executed. Again a decreer stands chargeable with the result of his decrees when carried out. For example: A king decrees the death of a man: and having all the knowledge necessary in the case, if the man die wrongfully the guilt lies at the door of the king; but if justly, the king receives honor for having performed a righteous act. Well now to the point.

1st, If God has decreed all things that comes to pass, it is his will they shall come to pass. Sin has come to pass in ten thousand instances, therefore it is his will that sin exist in every case in which it does exist. The unavoidable conclusion from this is, that he who commits sin does God's will as perfectly as he who always does right. And out of this is another conclusion still more revolting, which is that God punishes men in this world, and sends them to hell for doing his will. Monstrous conclusion! and yet how can it be avoided?

2. The character of the decreer can be arrived at from the nature of his decrees. If God has decreed the existence of all the sins which ever have been committed, we are inevitably forced to the conclusion that he delights in sin. Otherwise he never would have decreed it. And if he delights in sin he must be a sinner himself. We tremble when we write it, and yet is it not a just conclusion.

3. A decreer stands accountable for the result of his decrees when executed. Therefore God in some sense is chargeable with the ruinous results of all the sins committed in the universe.

4. We object because the scripture abundantly shows that God, in

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out of his wicked acts, wills not the death of any man. God decrees contrary to his will. "He wills not the death of any man." Therefore he never decreed that any man should die without repentance for his sins. But the Calvinists would have us believe that God must go out of himself to find a reason for his decrees. But let us go to the scripture. 2 Pet. 3, 9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Ez. 18: 32: "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God, wherefore turn yourselves and live ye." Ez. 33: 11: "Say unto them as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye, from your evil way, for why will ye die, O house of Israel!" In these several passages we have a clear expression of God's will and pleasure. 1st, He does not will, nor has he any pleasure in the death of him that dieth. And 2dly, it is his will and pleasure that the wicked turn and live. All this, to our mind, would be solemn mockery in God if he had created the wicked for hell, and had decreed, long before all worlds were made, that they, without any regard to a want of faith, repentance, or any lack of them, should be punished with eternal destruction. For surely, if God made them for that purpose, and decreed to that effect, it would not be contrary to his will and pleasure to have his purpose and decree carried out.

III. Present our system as we understand, and believe it.

We would first remark, that with God there is no fore or after thought, purpose, or decree. To him time with all its circling years, and eternity past, present, and to come, constitute but one eternal now. Yet to bring down his acts and purposes to the comprehension of finite man, he sees proper to represent himself as willing, repenting and acting like man. We will, therefore, use the liberty the scripture seems to allow, and speak of God as purposing and doing one thing before another.

When God determined to create the world and man, out of the innumerable systems which doubtless rose up before his mind, he no doubt chose the one which he knew would finally result in more glory to himself, and happiness to his creatures than any other—notwithstanding he knew sin would be introduced. It seems that the first part of this plan was to create man a free moral agent, throwing the responsibility of his acts upon himself. Secondly, He determined to test the obedience of all men by the obedience of the first, so that if he should

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stand out his day of trial, all would be represented into failed all would be represented into death. Hence we representative. "Wherefore as by one man sin entered in and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that <sup>is</sup> ned"—Rom. 5: 12. The result of this trial was that man Thirdly, God now determined to give man a second representa- trial. And this he did in the person of his son, who in the same federal capacity, and covering the whole ground of the first Adam, too, man's place in law, rendered personal obedience to it, and suffered the penalty annexed to Adam's transgression. The result of all this is, that all the world have another day of trial, in which life is suspended, not as formerly upon federal obedience, but on personal faith in Jesus Christ. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Rom. 5: 19. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."—John 3: 36.

That God in the great scheme of the world's redemption, planned for, and willed the salvation of all men is further evident from his design in sending his Son into the world: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."—John 3, 17. We will now present this system as a whole, that the reader may see it, and its harmony at a glance. First, It was God's will that all be saved in Adam. Secondly, It is now his will that all be saved in Christ. God loved the world, Christ tasted death for every man, and was the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The spirit lightens every man that cometh into the world, and reproves the world. And finally the command was to preach the gospel to every creature. Then follows an expression of his purpose, or decree concerning man. 'Whosoever believeth shall be saved, and whosoever believeth not shall be damned.' From this, it seems that God's decree for, or against man's salvation is made in view of faith, or want of faith in each individual. Faith is the turning point. O what endless realities, and undying interests hang around this awful, yet simple word! Sinner! heaven or hell is suspended on it.

The inquiry then is, does God give all men power to exercise faith in Christ? Or in other words, where lies the power of choice? With God, Satan, or man? If it lies with God, it must be in accordance with his will and pleasure. And if so, then all will be saved. If it lies with the Devil, all will be damned. But all are neither saved nor

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Therefore the power of choosing life or death, or of believing is lodged with man. And so the scripture seems "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, saith the Lord, before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore shall I bring forth that both thou and thy seed may live."—Deut. 30, 19. "I seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, chose you this day or no, you shall serve."—Josh. 24, 15. From these two passages, as well as from a host of others, it is quite clear that man must make the choice. Well, if all men can, in the exercise of the power promised to all, choose life or believe, then all may be saved. And if all may be saved, God never decreed that any, irrespective of personal choice or agency, be damned; unless we suppose that man possesses the power to break the decree of God. And surely none are so unreasonable as to believe this. The truth seems to be this, God never decreed that any sinner should believe in Christ, and that others should not. But he did decree to give all the power to believe, and to save all who did, and to damn all who did not believe. Nor does this make it uncertain with God as to those who will, and who will not be saved.—For he knows things, because he sees they will be. His knowledge brings nothing to pass. Again, to us it is quite plain that no man can believe in Christ, with all his heart, as the scripture requires, unless he first believe that all may be saved. We will illustrate this by an example. We were once credibly informed of a man, who, on becoming concerned about his condition, went to a certain Calvinistic minister to know of him whether he was one of the elect. The minister informed him he could not tell. "But read," said he the 2nd chapter of Hebrews and judge for yourself. He read to the 9th verse, and comes to these words: "But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." He paused in astonishment, thinking surely he had read it wrong.—He read it again—found he was not mistaken. Something like the following were his thoughts. "He tasted death for every man: well, if he tasted death for every man, all may be saved; for every one means all: and he would not have died for all, if all cannot now be saved. I am one of that number. He tasted death for me." The cloud that Calvinism had rolled between his soul, and his God disappeared. He saw by faith his Saviour and rejoiced in him as the Saviour of the whole world.

We would be very far from believing that there are not thousands of good Christians who believe with Calvin. But it does seem to us that

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the mind, in taking hold on Christ must view him as the Saviour: that is, that all may be saved through him. How could individual know but that he was one of the non-elect? And expected this, even in a slight degree, his faith in the same person would be weakened. Again, is it not the experience of every Christian on earth, or in heaven that, at the moment of regeneration saw a fullness, and sufficiency in Christ for the whole world?

#### IV. Practical influence of the two doctrines.

1. It is argued by the Calvinists that theirs is a comfortable doctrine. And wherefore? Because some are sure of heaven. Well, so far good enough. It is certainly a source of comfort to the elect to know that he is sure of heaven. But the same doctrine makes some sure of hell. Reader, suppose you were among the number of the eternal reprobates, (and if you are yet unconverted you have as much reason to suppose that as the contrary,) would it be a source of comfort for you to know that without any regard to your acts, either good or evil, God had foreordained eternal damnation for you? Could you love such a God as this? As impossible as to create a world! The influence of this doctrine is to cause all who do not know that they are of the elect number to continue in their hatred to God. But again, would it be comfortable to the Christian parents to believe God had reprobated some or all of their family to eternal death? Would it be a source of comfort to the elect husband to believe it was probable God had decreed in himself, without any regard to her conduct, that the companion of his bosom, his second-self would soon be wailing among the number of the finally lost in hell? Humanity sickens at the thought.

2. The influence of this doctrine is to destroy all concern in the sinner's heart about his future destiny. Why should he be concerned about his future state, since God has foreordained eternal life or death for him long before all worlds were made? For he could stop the course of nature, in its onward rush to eternity, as easily as he could change that foreordination. Hence he settles down upon this soul-destroying conclusion. If I am to be saved, I will be saved; and if I am to be damned I can't help it. I will hold myself in readiness, waiting the effectual calling of God's spirit. We know the supporters of this doctrine will say these are erroneous conclusions. But we also know men do form them, and we cannot see wherein the error lies. The reader must judge for himself.

3. The practical influence of the other doctrine is good. 1st, be-

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imparts comfort and encouragement both to the christian  
nner. As to the security of the christian, one system makes  
rtain as the other. For we hold that it is one of God's  
rees to save in heaven every soul who believes in Christ.  
y it is comfortable for the christian to know that the whole  
y be saved as well as himself. And this is a source of com-  
the Calvinist is deprived of, unless he believe that man can break  
the decree of God. Is it not comfortable and encouraging to the sin-  
ner to believe that he was embraced in the covenant of grace—that  
Christ died intentionally to save him, and that all things necessary for  
his and the world's redemption, on God's part, are provided and made  
sure? Does not this view of the subject offer encouragements to eve-  
ry sinner, strong and weighty as the interests of heaven and hell can  
make them, to fly for refuge to a compassionate Redeemer, whose  
arms of love and mercy are expanded wide enough to embrace the  
whole world? And finally, this system affords the greatest possible  
encouragement to the minister and the christian to labor and make  
sacrifices in the great work of the world's redemption. With a firm  
belief that, by his own faithfulness and activity, he can, instrumentally,  
add to the number of the redeemed, or then by his sloth and inactivi-  
ty he will swell the dark list of the eternally damned, the minister goes  
to his field of labor with the undying interests of heaven and endless  
woes of hell circling around his soul. He trembles, he fears, he  
weeps, he prays, under an awful sense that some immortal soul, made  
for realms of immortality, may, through his want of faithfulness, feed  
the flames that never expire.

And now, sinner, in conclusion, if our system be true you are call-  
ed upon to decide upon your own case. You must determine wheth-  
er, in a few fleeting years, you will be one among the redeemed in  
the world of light and glory, or otherwise be tossed upon the hot  
waves of despair in a deep and awful hell; while above, beneath, and  
all around are fearful signs of wo, and on its walls, in sheets of livid  
wrath, are seen these awful words: "You would not be redeemed."

RELIGION.

RELIGION.

BY REV. J. C. PROVINE, OF MISSISSIPPI.

*"Pure religion."*—James 1, and first clause of the 27th vers.

The position is now assumed, and we believe sustained, that by nature is a religious being. Moral philosophers, in examining constitution, or rather the inmate propensities of his heart, have seen proper to give him the appellation of a "religious animal," or at least in their investigations they have deduced this conclusion, that such is his nature, that he will worship; he will have his Deity or Deities whom he adores, upon whom he centres his affections, whose favor he supplicates, whose wrath he deprecates. And upon examination this is found not only to be characteristic of man in a state of civilization, but is found true of him in all ages and in all grades of barbarity and ignorance. True it has been asserted by some modern Tourists who have made excursions through some of the islands of the ocean, that there were tribes of people there without any form of religion. But the close and critical examinations of still more modern travellers has settled this question beyond controversy, and the fact is now ascertained and accredited that there is not now, nor ever has been since the dispersion at Babel, a nation of people but that had some system of religion. It is true they may not possess what we would denominate systems; there may not be embodied in them all the constituents of a system, they may be but fragments of broken systems which they have by tradition or by a correspondence with surrounding nations, yet that does not alter the case, for they have other forms of worship, they have their rites and ceremonies and many religious observances, which to all human appearance are as sacred to them, as the cross of Christ is to the Christian.

In noticing the subject under consideration, we first propound the question, WHAT IS RELIGION? When we consider the position occupied by man in the world, and the circumstances with which he is surrounded, there is to him no question of such magnitude, more fraught with importance; it is one that has claims upon his attention and always commends itself to his serious and candid consideration. But such is the natural perverseness of the mind to the contemplation of subjects of a religious character that this question scarcely ever elicits that attention which its importance and magnitude merit: and of consequence it is rarely ever investigated and properly understood, and when we make this remark, we mean it to apply exclusive-

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habitants of Christendom; the country where the gospel is and moral influence is prevalent. Now to the question bounded. We will meet with a variety of responses and will meet with no two christians who would give the same exposition; one would perhaps say that religion is "obedience to God," and another that it is a system of moral precepts, and a third that it is a compliance with the requisitions of the gospel.— Now it is true that every intelligent mind could (like St. James in the vision of which the text is a part) define religion by its influence and results, but come back to the simple abstract question, what is religion, and we would be feasted with a multiplied variety of definitions.

Guided by the teaching of theologians upon this subject, we conclude that religion means a union with Christ. Now, union is the legitimate meaning of the term *religion*, considered in its derivative sense. Well, in the gospel Christ is represented as the author of salvation, as the object of faith, and to whom the christian is said to be united; therefore union with Christ may be regarded as the true import of the term religion, and I know of no definition in the wide range of human conception more appropriate and more expressive.

Again for a practical purpose we propound the question, how many are there who have religion? This is an enquiry too, fraught, with much interest, especially to the christian philanthropist who feels a great concern for the promotion of the kingdom of Christ, and the universal spread of the gospel, and to every individual who looks out with anxiety to that blessed period when the heathen shall be given to Christ for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. To arrive at a proper solution of this question, we will take up the statistics of the whole world. According to these the population of the globe now is near one thousand millions; by calculation from the most authentic sources but one fourth of this vast number, (say two hundred and fifty million) including the whole Roman Church, are under the influence of christianity; of that number, about one-third (say eighty-three million and a fraction,) are Protestants, including all sects and denominations. Subtract one-fourth of these for spurious professors and those who reject the vitals of religion, and you have left about sixty-two million who may be regarded as christians, and this estimate too, may be exaggerated. Then, oh! what a comparatively small number compose the kingdom of Christ on earth, and what a vast and almost innumerable multitude compose the empire of darkness! Truly, there is much territory yet to be possessed

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Truly there is a vast work to be accomplished on the part of the church of Christ. And does not this destitution, this famine of so many millions of our fellow beings awaken the sympathies of every benevolent philanthropic heart? and does not the state of things call for energy efficiency and a cordial co-operation on the part of the christian church in all her branches, that a knowledge of Christ and his salvation may with all speed be carried to the benighted nations of earth.

But it is indeed animating to the christian to know, that such is the spirit of benevolent enterprise which now is prevalent in our happy country as well as in other christian lands, that the blessed crisis is fast approaching when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; for the heralds of the cross have already erected the standard of christianity upon almost every shore, and from the signs of the day, we may safely judge, that the long-wished for period will soon usher in when the universal triumph of the gospel shall be proclaimed and a voice heard from the most excellent glory

"Announcing the contest ended,  
And him who was once slain;  
Again to earth descended  
In righteousness to reign."

But to the subject, I remark, in the next place, that the religion of mankind may be comprehended under four divisions. 1<sup>st</sup>, Heathenism. (or Idol worship.) 2<sup>dly</sup>, Mohammedanism. 3<sup>dly</sup>, Judaism. 4<sup>thly</sup>, Christianity.

With regard to the first named system, (if it may be so denominated such,) we remark that in its examination we discover that it possesses no fixed principles, nor any permanent uniform doctrines; for what is regarded as a doctrine in one heathen nation is not in another; neither is there any unanimity with regard to the objects of their adoration. While one is engaged in worshipping the Sun, Moon or "Starry host," another is pouring out libations and offering sacrifices to some supposed Deity, and a third is paying his devotion at the margin of "some ancient river of sacred memory." So we conclude that the principles of this system may be considered more the offspring of place, climate or circumstance than any thing else. But, notwithstanding all this, there are multitudes upon multitudes, even at the present age, who are thus blindfolded by the God of this world and are enshrouded in a moral night, who have no knowledge of God or the glorious plan of salvation which is developed in the scriptures.

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Mohammedanism. This may be considered as a compound of Judaism and Judaism, for in it is embodied much of the ignorance and superstition of the one and some of the principles, in conformity with many of the rites and ceremonies of the other. With reference to this system, we remark that it bears with it its own refutation. Examining the biography of its author (Mahomet the arch impostor of Arabia,) we are informed that when he first made his appearance as a Teacher—that he set up claims to Divine power and pretendingly resorted to the performance of miracles in attestation of his Divine mission; but soon it became manifest that his performances were the result of stratagem, a mere illusion of the senses, and that he possessed no such power. When this fact was ascertained, he then renounced all such pretensions, but averred that he was commissioned of God to go out and publish his new system and by a process of argumentation establish its Divine authenticity, and if he could not succeed in this way, he must succeed by the power and influence of the sword; accordingly, failing in the first plan, he resorted to the second, and soon with a vast army he spread carnage and desolation over the Eastern World, demolished cities and depopulated Empires in order to give prevalency to a system of religion which had for its object the mental and moral degradation of man, and what was worse than all, the destruction of his everlasting interest.

Again, we find that after the death of this individual, it was re-asserted by his Califfs, that he did possess Divine power, and that he evinced the same performance of supernatural works. But, notwithstanding the inconsistency of the system and the contradictory statements of its author and advocates, there are multitudes who are yet the dupes of this foul delusion and are making their annual pilgrimage to Mecca, their sacred city, and thousands are yearly dying there, believing that if they can even close their existence within the corporation of the "Prophet's Holy City" that their salvation beyond the grave is secured. Oh! what a fatal delusion! what a strange infatuation! Well may the Poet exclaim, "Man, proud man, dressed in a little brief authority, plays such fantastic tricks before high Heaven as makes the Angels weep!"

3dly, Judaism. With regard to this system, so far as its moral principles are concerned, they strictly accord with the principles of christianity; and so far as its rites and ceremonies are concerned, they are of Divine appointment, and instead of regarding them as rendered null and void, when the "law of sacrifices was abolished," they are

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still clung to with tenacity and continued to be kept up. The great distinguishing characteristic of this system, a rejection of Christ and an opposition to his gospel. It not appearing as an earthly prince or mighty conqueror, in hand to subdue the nations of the earth and to bring subjection to the Jewish power, but appearing as a spirit, to save the people from their sins, was therefore rejected and by cruel hands and crucified, "For he came unto his own, and his own received him not."

4thly, Christianity. This is the system developed in the scriptures, it is the system which by "signs and symbols," was taught unto the Patriarchs and Fathers of the church. It is the plan about which Prophets and holy men spake as they were moved upon by the Divine spirit. It is the blessed scheme proclaimed by Christ whilst manifest in the flesh. It is that which he commissioned his disciples to proclaim unto the end of time, as the only plan by which man can be brought back to his pristine state of purity and holiness and prepared for the enjoyment of everlasting life.

This system claims God for its author; it professes to be of Divine origin, and truly on it is visibly stamped the "Divine impress."

1st, In it is manifest the wisdom of God; for no wisdom save that of omniscience could have devised such a glorious scheme;—a scheme which is conservative both of the character of God and the interest of man. It throws an eternal safeguard around the Divine perfections and saves them from any infringement. It sustains the justice of the law as well as the dignity of the throne, and at the same time is adapted to man in his low state of moral pollution, and is designed to elevate him therefrom to a state of christian holiness in this world and ultimately to elevate him to a blessed state of immortality in the world of spirits.

2ndly, In it is manifest the love of God, well may the apostle exclaim, "behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us that we should be called the sons of God." Well may the enraptured Poet, after contemplating this subject, exclaim.

"O love divine, where are thy limits; great God  
Beyond the sight of mortals and of angels.  
The stupendous sun, the brilliant moon,  
The amazing stars, the extended firmament  
These have their bounds; thy love  
Has none; it extends

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and the flaming bounds of space and time;  
reaches from the living throne, the sapphire blaze  
where angels tremble as they gaze  
on man's humblest habitation."

In this system the happiness of man is the great object contemplated. This is a world of sin, from centre to circumference; it is a world of ruin; a howling wilderness, a lonesome desert. Consequently, it is a world of misery, but in the gospel is presented the great consolation, the remedy for all the evils incident to human life. Herein is presented the great Physician, whose office it is to heal the maladies of the heart, to bind up the broken spirit; to pour the oil of consolation into the disconsolate soul; here is indeed the antidote for the sin-sick soul; here is the balm of Gilead, the Elixir of Life. And the experience of every christian is evidence to the point, that it is Christ and Christ alone, that can speak peace to the troubled soul. Yea often, amid the severest storms and mighty conflicts of life, "the still small," yet sweet voice of the Saviour is heard saying, 'fear not, it is I.' It is this which sustains the Fatherless and widow in their afflictions. It is this, too, that may impart peace and consolation to the orphan amid the years of his bereavement and enable him ever to exclaim,

" 'Tis religion that can give  
Sweetest pleasures while we live."

Finally, in this system, life and immortality is brought to light. Let Philosophers theorise, let Metaphysicians speculate upon this subject guided alone by the teaching of nature and the dictates of reason, and soon they are bewildered and lost in the mazes of doubt and uncertainty. But let the christian turn to the gospel and there the glorious and important fact is developed, that his destiny is eternity; and this is the christian's chief glory that there is a

"Place where verdure and blossoms never fade  
And fields are eternally fair."

And when his labors on earth are over he shall dwell in peace there, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are forever at rest." To him the grave is stript of its gloom and encircled with a rich halo. The Star of Bethlehem arises and sheds a glorious light there; it points the wayworn christian, not into its cold and lonesome vault, but it bids him look upward to a home in the skies. Behold that heathen yonder, who has no gospel and no knowledge of immortality; to him how dark and forbidding must be the grave! He looks not beyond its narrow mansion, but regards it as his eternal resting place,

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never to be resuscitated; no more to meet with friends; joy the society of kindred spirits; but to dwell in eternity. But it is not so with the pious christian; he regards the temporary resting place for his decayed and emaciated; are his notions and desires circumscribed to its narrow limits? No, he looks upward to a happy state of immortality at the right hand of the Father, and he looks out too with intense interest to that glorious period at the bidding of the almighty his mortal shall put on immortality, his corruptible shall put on incorruption; and shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." Is this be pure and undefiled religion, if this be the import of the christian system I ask how excellent how glorious it is? Then let Jews glory in Judaism, let Mahomedans boast of their Koran, and the Hotentot his Shaster; but the christian will glory in nothing save the cross, and count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of the christian system.

### Editor's Department.

#### DEMAND FOR THE HOME MISSIONARY IN IOWA.

We have recently received a private letter from a brother, whom we received into the church where we labored with encouragement some fifteen years ago, from which we give the subjoined extract as it plainly shows the necessity for effort on the part of our church to send out the home missionary to plant the standard of truth, gather the scattered sheep, and call lost sinners to repentance. The case stated in the extract is by no means uncommon in Iowa and other parts of the West and South West. In view of this fact can we as a people be indifferent to the claims of the home missionary work? Have we no heart to sympathise with our destitute brethren scattered as sheep without a shepherd? no heart to pity, nor love prompting us to seek and save the crowds of lost sinners beyond the influence of the regular means of grace? Have we none of the spirit of him who came into this world on the great mission of mercy? Have we no disposition to spread the benign and heavenly influence of the gospel of his grace; to go out into the streets and lanes, the highways and hedges, and invite the perishing multitudes to come and partake of the rich provisions of the gospel feast, amply provided for all, enough for each, unexhausted and inexhaustible. Will we not apply ourselves to the

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ed love, zeal and fidelity—fidelity to ourselves, fidelity to our cause, which is also the cause of our race. We may rightly appreciate the call for home mission churches, we ask them to contemplate particular instances such as are stated in the extract which follows:—“I have lived in this country upwards of seven years, and I was a Cumberland Presbyterian preacher in that time and in the absence of other preaching in my neighborhood; I ask you in the name of the great Head of the church, can there not be something more done for the West by our church? Are there no soldiers of the cross who are willing to come to the far West, yes to Iowa, a beautiful and goodly land, and here labor to save souls, to advance the Redeemer's cause? I think there could be a church built up in my neighborhood and in other contiguous places, some of them not inferior in importance to any others in the country, which is settling rapidly and I believe in general with the best of emigrants.

I wrote to a brother at Mt. Pleasant for some brethren to pay me a visit and preach for us; but he could not come himself nor send any one, he informed me that there were four or five churches destitute of pastors and that it was impossible to supply them; and therefore I despair of obtaining any help from that source, and now apply to you to do something for this country. \* \* I have been solicited time after time to join another church, but I cannot depart from my first love to the church of my choice; I believe her doctrines; and wish to enjoy church privileges in her communion. I know there ought to be a Cumberland Presbyterian church here, and I think there can and will be, or at least as long as I live, I will pray and strive for it. \* \*

I suppose you would like to know how I spend my Sabbaths well. I can tell you, I employ a part of them with from 25 to 30 children, teaching them to read and understand what they read as far as I am able to instruct them.” \* \*

In the face of facts like these can any one doubt the urgent necessity for home missionary organization and effort. We refer the brother's case to the attention of the missionary Board. Will it not receive the consideration of preachers who are so crowded together at some places as to be in each other's way? We trust some of the young brethren, at Princeton Lebanon and other places, who are preparing for the ministry, are looking on the wants of the West; and have their eye and heart fixed on some of the open and inviting fields where the herald of the cross is so greatly needed.

## Demand for Home Missionaries.

We should have our home missionary system in vigor. The necessity of this may be seen in the subjoined. In Banner of Peace, dated Winnebago School, July 20, 1892 Lowry, after speaking of a Methodist campmeeting with of the Indian country, remarks:—

The circuit-rider has always been first to follow, if with the tide of emigration, and most generally preaches the mon to newly formed communities on our frontiers.

The American Home Missionary Society, as well as other similar institutions, have done much to disseminate and defend the truth in the West, but still the itinerating system, in my judgment, combines advantages peculiar to itself.

The preachers at the camp-meeting informed me that they often met with Cumberland Presbyterians, on their respective circuits, but they were without preachers of their own church. Presbyteries of the north would do well to enquire into this matter. If furnished with suitable ministers let circuits be formed, and hunt up the sheep scattered in the wilderness. If preachers be too much engaged at home for such labor abroad, let it be remembered that "the Lord of the harvest" will in answer to prayer "send forth more laborers into his vineyard."—Aggressive operations by the church abroad is the best way to secure permanent prosperity at home.

Let the young men of our northern Presbyteries wake up and come out as pioneers—form circuits, organize churches, &c., and let the older brethren follow after and aid them in holding camp-meetings, &c. Many of our dear young ministers are perhaps straitened as to means, for such expeditions. Are you willing to say "Lord here I am: send me?" God will provide. The writer remembers well when the lamented Downey set out from Kentucky for his circuit in Indiana. He rode a borrowed horse, furnished by our late venerable father Wilson of Russellville. The memory of brother Downey is yet dear to the churches of Indiana. Is there no second Downey of Illinois or Iowa, who will say to his Presbytery "send me," and if without a horse, is there no godly father in the church who, like brother Wilson will say, take mine?

### The Good Work Reviving.

Our heart rejoices in revival intelligence. It is like a thirsty soul. It refreshes, encourages and fills with joy that communes with heaven, that sympathises with earth. We are happy to see more of it appearing in the Religious Journals. May it greatly increase. Is it strange that our heart rejoices in the progress of the good work: angels and good saints in Heaven rejoice over the sinner that repenteth. If we are numbered with them we will rejoice too. O, that as preachers and people we may anew and deeply drink into the genuine revival spirit? It is our real life as a people. Whoever may despise and speak lightly of revivals; we never can, while we continue in our first love, while the warm heart of spirituality throbs in our church, while we learn of Christ and are possessed of a meek and lowly spirit, caring more for Heaven than earth, more concerned for the deathless spirit than dying clay.

Revivals give the churches their increase, their members, their ministers and missionaries, convert our children our parents, relatives and neighbors, and make a pure and healthful moral atmosphere in our literary institutions, reform our cities, towns, villages and neighborhoods. By revivals the heathen are converted, and by their instrumentality the world is to be regenerated. Ah, what a condition would the church and the world be in without true revivals of religion? Sad world would ours be, deprived of the direct and indirect influence of the genuine revival spirit.

A correspondent speaking of a meeting which terminated in the conversion of between 50 and 60 souls, remarks "the season was truly pleasant because of the presence of the Lord." \* \* Pleasant, yes, it could not be otherwise, where redeeming love is so displayed, and sinners are bowing to our Prince and Saviour.

Let it be the earnest and importuning prayer of all the Saviour's friends that the drops of mercy falling on different parts of Zion's thirsty hill, may become general showers, rills and torrents of gospel grace. Assured that the ear of Heaven is open to prayer, what heart can be prayerless? The Lord grant us all faithfulness, purity and love in his work so shall we walk in the spirit of our holy religion, and consistently exemplify its principles in our lives.

